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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

THE RISE of Bolshevism in Russia and its rapid expansion has provoked a world conflict which is perilously close to breaking into all-out warfare on a global scale. An understanding of the dynamics of total power, particularly its effect upon the thoughts and feelings of man, might enable us to appraise the menacing implications of this world struggle and to find effective ways to influence its outcome. In an attempt to contribute to such objectives, we shall discuss in the following pages some of the social agents which have affected the formation of power and the growth of personality in Russian society and which might be the sources of its political explosiveness.

It is proposed that some of the most crucial elements in this social drama are the political elites, their psychology, their cul tural background and the social setting in which they act. In this interplay of personality, culture, social structure and ideology seems to lie the dynamic source of social change and of its trend. It appears that a system of interpersonal and institutional relationships (social structure) reinforced or undermined by traditional patterns of behavior (culture) and by external physical and social pressures affects the growth of personality and the composition and circulation of political elites. These in turn develop attitudes and formulate ideologies which tend to pro-

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voke changes in the system of political relations (power structure) and hence in the social structure.

Two contrasting cultures, that of the power-seeking and self-oriented nomadic horsemen of the Eurasian steppes, and that of the anarchic and group-oriented tillers of the land in the river basins of eastern Europe, provide valuable data for an understanding of the formation of political elites in Russian society, and particularly for identification of conflicting orientations which have been at the root of its social instability and political aggression throughout ages of its growth. There were other sources of conditioning circumstances which have provided significant elements to the content of Russia's culture and its social structure and which have affected the recruitment of political elites and the formation of ideologies. Such were, for instance, the Byzantine system of the administration and of the Church-State relations, the conditions of serfdom and the retarded growth of middle classes, and Western European technology and political and social philosophies. There were also "external" pressures which—in conjunction with Russia's geographic location—have influenced its social and political development. Such, for instance, were the quality of Russia's soil and climate, the moving of the trade routes from the Dnieper valley toward the West in the late middle ages, the sudden growth and disintegration of the Mongol empire, the formation and the expansion of Western European and of Pacific imperial systems. A number of these agents, however, have tended to perpetuate the initial basic structure and to intensify the clash of views of life which was introduced into Russian society through the imposition of the rule of the steppe nomads over the tillers of the land in the ancient past.

One of the basic traits in the interpersonal and institutional relationships of the horse-breeders from the steppes consists of an apparent want of lasting emotional attachments, of social trust and of ties of moral unity. There is a lack of stability in loyalties and therefore a system of power which is self-oriented, that is, based on personal drives for aggrandizement. Only continuing conquests and lasting threats of common external enemies can assure the perpetuation of this predatory system

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of rule. The defeat or death of the ruler, as much as lack of constant external pressures, are likely to bring about a sudden disintegration of a political structure based on such foundations. 121 181

Want of human attachments in the society of these steppe marauders might have been brought about by a strong feeling of insecurity which seems to be rooted in the physical as well as in the social environment of these people. Nomadic horse-breeding in the steppes and deserts, abusive dominance and humiliating submission in a despotic family organization, autocratic political system, sharply stratified social structure, and predatory warfare of enemy tribes present constant physical and emotional threats which breed deep fears, anxieties, lack of trust and violent hostilities. These conditions are harmful to the growth of social intimacy and to the development of group identifications and solidarities; they are likely to favor formation of a self-centered personality and to foster an urge for extreme power-seeking and destructive action as a means of personal survival. [154]

Contrasted to the society of these power-oriented and predatory warriors of the steppes, was the group-oriented and anarchic culture of the Old-Slavonic soil cultivators, spreading since remote times over the forest plains and along the river valleys between the upper Volga and the Carpathians. This society represented a stable system of self-contained and autonomous small agricultural communities with equalitarian social and family organization, diffused social power, lack of central political authority, lack of sharp economic or social stratification and lack of coerciveness. Interpersonal and institutional relationships in these communities promoted group intimacy and social cohesion; they discouraged self-seeking, destructive aggressiveness and warlike qualities. But as the nomadic warriors, in the course of their centuries-old invasions, were imposing their rule over this egalitarian and stateless social system, significant changes were taking place in the Old-Slavonic world; these have formed the basis for the formation and the growth of Russian society. [156]

One of the most important innovations consisted of the formation of a ruling class of conquerors whose whole view of life was in complete contrast to the social and political philosophy of the

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subjected agricultural population. In the ruling class of conquerors—who were marrying the native women—the steppe traditions of an unlimited paternal power, centered in a God-like, distant and strict father, tended to prevail. The principles of seniority, of priority of the male sex and of super-ordination and subordination among brothers and sisters favored sibling rivalry in this family system. At the same time, the mother, following her native traditions, tended to assert her marital equality, to maintain separate property rights, to teach her children the native speech and customs, and to protect them against the caprice and wrath of a domineering and warlike father.

[155] It is likely that children in such families of clashing marital and social philosophies might be exposed to alternating experiences of rejection and over-protection; they might develop an exaggerated self-concern and power-orientation, as well as feelings of inadequacy and dependence. Extremes in emotional reactions ranging from blind submission to destructive aggression and violent revolt tend to develop in such circumstances.

Such traits which contain a core of emotional instability and perpetual strife did not seem to be favorable for the growth and consolidation of State. Instead, a number of small principalities were formed, whose ruling strata were torn by internal rivalries and splits, and by never-ending parricidal and fratricidal feuds. Moreover, these petty princes and war chieftains, following steppe tradition, were interested in waging warfare more than in promoting agriculture or industry—which was contrary to the view of life and the social philosophy of the subjected population. There was, therefore, a lack of common culture, lack of common interests and want of social solidarity between the subjects and their warlike lords. Such a situation fomented social unrest; local riots and mass uprisings, which in turn promoted increasing rigidity of controls, centralization of power, never-ending internal splits and never-ending warfare.

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By the ninth century A.D., these turbulent warriors came into conflict with the Byzantine Empire which had a political interest in the same area. This contact with Byzantium was of far-reaching consequence, because it introduced the Eastern Church into the social and political structure of Russian society. This institu-

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121 Modern methods of study have taught us to attach an importance scarcely appreciated a score of years ago to popular songs and popular customs. What is called the science of folk-lore (though its methods are scarcely well enough digested and ordered to entitle it to the term) is opening the way to new revelations of unexpected interest and value touching racial origins and relations, primitive religions and the development of social and political systems. In nursery tales and popular songs we are learning to recognize fragments of early mythologies and histories. When this fact is fully recognized we may expect to see a marvellous out-blossoming of an interest in several branches of science toward which the mass of the people have been indifferent heretofore. Ethnology, archæology and anthropology will no longer have a terrifying sound when the knowledge becomes general that they can be studied in the intelligent perusal of fairy tales and inculcated through the agency of folk songs.

For this delightful method of study no field offers greater inducements than the Russian. This is indicated by the statements of Ralston which I have placed at the beginning of this note.[1] 114 It can not be said of any country that all its treasures of folk-song and folk-lore have been brought to light;—not even of Germany where the greatest labor has been expended. Least of all can it be said of Russia which, in its heart, may be said to be a sealed book not only to other nations but even to the majority of its own inhabitants. The explanation lies, I think, in two circumstances, *first*, the Russia which has been open to the inspection of the general reader hitherto is the Russia of imperial cities with its veneer and varnish of foreign culture; *second*, the political system of the Czar's mighty empire has not encouraged true national expression in art. So long as Russia failed in appreciation of her own possessions, it was not likely that the outside world should place a high value on them.

Of recent years, however, we have witnessed a mighty change in Russia's attitude toward her own people; and this has been followed, in a marvelously quick time by a change in the attitude of other people toward Russia's artistic products. In literature and painting and in music Russia now holds the

[1] [see cat. 116, p.5 -- Analyst]

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attention of the world as if through the magic of an irresitible charm. 114

We are, however, concerned directly with Russian art only in so far as it reflects those primitive impulses which give it character and individuality. These things are the very soul of the people's songs, and the customs of which those songs are an integral element. It was a happy idea to bring the marriage customs of these people on the stage and thus to give us a beautiful object lesson in the scientific study of which I have spoken. Books, paintings and musical performances have done much to make us understand Russian thought and feeling, but nothing could be devised to vitalize this understanding better than a dramatic representation of the chief incidents of the wooing and wedding as they have existed from time immemorial. The antiquity of the ceremonial observances is indicated in the relics of savagery which they contain—the obvious modification of marriage by theft or capture and marriage by purchase. The subservience of wife is characteristic of the patriarchal system still prevalent; but there are not wanting suggestions of a much earlier system when descent was traced in the female line and the husband became a member of the family, or gena, of his wife. 121

But it is not my purpose to dwell on this, to which reference will be found hereafter in the description of the wedding ceremony. I am more directly concerned with the music of the songs which occur in the course of the ceremony. The predominant note of Russian music is profound melancholy. This is true even of songs with which the maiden friends of the bride beguile their labors during the *devitchink* at which the wedding garments are prepared. As a rule climatic and geopraphical conditions explain the prevalence of the major or minor mode in folk-music. Thus the music of all Europe above the southern line of the North Sea is predominantly minor. South of that line it is major except in Russia. Even in the Oukraina the melancholy mode prevails. It is obvious, therefore, that the question is not distinctly one of latitude, but of the consequences of latitude. Suffering is a familiar idea to people living in the cold, gloomy and rugged northland; and the symbol of suffering in 533

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important minorities form autonomous oblasts within the krays, while lesser ethnic groups form national okrugs or even national rayons within oblasts or krays. At present the Russian SFSR includes 12 autonomous republics, 6 krays, and 50 oblasts.

In order to facilitate the study of the geography of the Russian SFSR, the republic has been divided into the following geographical regions on the basis of common physico-economic characteristics.

Central Industrial Region
- Moscow (Moskva) Oblast
- Vladimir Oblast
- Ivanovo Oblast
- Yaroslavl' Oblast
- Kostroma Oblast
- Ryazan' Oblast
- Tula Oblast

Central Black-Earth Region
- Orel Oblast
- Tambov Oblast
- Voronezh Oblast
- Kursk Oblast

European West
- Bryansk Oblast
- Kaluga Oblast
- Smolensk Oblast
- Velikiye Luki Oblast
- Kalinin Oblast

European Northwest
- Novgorod Oblast
- Pskov Oblast
- Leningrad Oblast

European North
- Murmansk Oblast
- Arkhangel'sk Oblast
- Komi Autonomous SSR
- Vologda Oblast

Volga Region

Forest section
- Gor'kiy Oblast
- Kirov Oblast
- Mari Autonomous SSR

Wooded-steppe section
- Tatar Autonomous SSR
- Chuvash Autonomous SSR
- Mordvinian Autonomous SSR
- Penza Oblast
- Ul'yanovsk Oblast
- Kuybyshev Oblast

Steppe section
- Saratov Oblast
- Stalingrad Oblast
- Astrakhan' Oblast

Crimean Oblast

Lower Don and Northern Caucasus
- Rostov Oblast
- Krasnodar Kray
- Stavropol' Kray
- Kabardinian Autonomous SSR
- North Ossetian Autonomous SSR
- Groznyy Oblast
- Dagestan Autonomous SSR

Urals
- Molotov Oblast
- Udmurt Autonomous SSR
- Bashkir Autonomous SSR
- Chkalov Oblast
- Chelyabinsk Oblast
- Sverdlovsk Oblast

Western Siberia
- Kurgan Oblast
- Tyumen' Oblast
- Omsk Oblast
- Novosibirsk Oblast
- Tomsk Oblast
- Kemerovo Oblast
- Altay Kray

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Eastern Siberia
- Krasnoyarsk Kray
- Tuva Autonomous Oblast
- Irkutsk Oblast
- Buryat-Mongol Autonomous SSR
- Chita Oblast
- Yakut Autonomous SSR

Soviet Far East
- Amur Oblast
- Khabarovsk Kray
- Maritime Kray
- Sakhalin Oblast

Kaliningrad Oblast, see Baltic Region, Chapter 26.